

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LILONG 01064 101337Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
AID-05 PC-01 /070 W
-----072582 110213Z /62

R 101145Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2066
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MI
SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF MALAWI PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

REF: (A) LILONGWE 901 (B) LILONGWE 1018 (C) LILONGWE 1052

1. SUMMARY: PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS TOOK PLACE QUIETLY
JUNE 29 IN 47 OF MALAWI'S 87 CONSTITUENCIES. CANDIDATES
IN 33 OTHER CONSTITUENCIES HAD EARLIER BEEN DECLARED TO
HAVE WON AS THEY WERE UNOPPOSED. ELECTIONS IN SEVEN
OTHER CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE HELD LATER. TABULATION
OF VOTES AND VOTER TURNOUT FIGURES NOT YET AVAILABLE.
TWO MINISTERS IN RECENT CABINET WERE DEFEATED. SEVERAL
FOREIGN NEWSMEN OBSERVED. ALTHOUGH NEW MPS LIKELY TO BE
BETTER-EDUCATED, NO CHANGE FORESEEN IN RUBBER-STAMP
NATURE OF PARLIAMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. RESULTS OF THE JUNE 29 ELECTION, ANNOUNCED JULY 3,
SHOW THAT 52 OF THE 96 MPS SERVING IN THE LAST PARLIA-
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MENT WERE RE-ELECTED. OF THOSE FORMER MPS NOT RE-
ELECTED, 30 HAD NOT BEEN NOMINATED BY THEIR CONSTITUENCIES
OR HAD FAILED TO QUALIFY EITHER IN ENGLISH OR FOR OTHER
REASONS (REF A); 14 WERE DEFEATED. EIGHT WOMEN WERE
ELECTED. UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES IN 33 CONSTITUENCIES
HAD EARLIER BEEN DECLARED TO HAVE BEEN ELECTED.
ELECTIONS IN 7 OTHER CONSTITUENCIES WILL TAKE PLACE

LATER.

3. TWO MEMBERS OF THE MOST RECENT CABINET WERE DEFEATED:

M. MALANI LUNGU, WHO HAD BEEN REGIONAL MINISTER FOR THE NORTH AND FOR SOME TIME HAS BEEN A FIXTURE IN THE NORTHERN BRANCH OF THE MALAWI CONGRESS PARTY (MCP), AND M. M. MKANDAWIRE, WHO HAD SERVED AS MINISTER OF EDUCATION ONLY SINCE FEBRUARY 1978 AND HAD NEVER BEFORE BEEN A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT. ON JULY 5 PRESIDENT BANDA REAPPOINTED LUNGU TO THE CABINET AS MINISTER-AT-LARGE (REF C), PRESUMABLY IN RECOGNITION OF HIS POLITICAL IMPORTANCE IN THE NORTHERN REGION. (HE REPLACED R.B. CHIDZANJA NKHOMA WHO DIED IN EARLY APRIL.)

4. PRESIDENT BANDA MAY CONSTITUTIONALLY STILL SELECT UP TO 15 MORE MPS, IN ADDITION TO MINISTER LUNGU. SINCE THERE WERE 15 WOMEN IN THE LAST PARLIAMENT, HE MAY (AS HAS BEEN HIS CUSTOM) USE THAT PREROGATIVE TO ADD TO THE EIGHT ELECTED THIS TIME.

5. VOTER TURNOUT FIGURES HAVE NOT AS YET BEEN RELEASED. MOST REPORTS, HEARD IN BLANTYRE DURING NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS LAST WEEK FROM A VARIETY OF GOM OFFICIALS THROUGHOUT MALAWI, INDICATE THAT THE TURNOUT WAS GOOD BUT NOWHERE NEAR 100 PERCENT.
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6 BBC RADIO AND TV, FINANCIAL TIMES, TIMES OF LONDON AND REUTERS (SOME OF WHOM ALSO SERVED AS STRINGERS FOR TIME MAGAZINE, UPI AND BUSINESS WEEK) ARRIVED JUST BEFORE THE ELECTION AND WERE ALLOWED ACCESS TO SOME POLLING STATIONS. TWO OF THEM (BBC RADIO AND FINANCIAL TIMES) TOLD THE CHARGE THAT THE ELECTION PROCEDURE APPEARED TO BE OPERATING SMOOTHLY AND THAT THEY WERE QUITE IMPRESSED BOTH BY THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTIONS AND THE FACT THAT THEY WERE HELD AT ALL, GIVEN WHAT EACH OF THEM HAD KNOWN ABOUT MALAWI BEFORE THIS TRIP.

7. COMMENT: IT IS STILL MUCH TOO EARLY TO TELL IF THE NEW MPS, WHO ARE PROBABLY BETTER EDUCATED THAN THE PREVIOUS ONES(AS THE RESULT OF THE ENGLISH REQUIREMENT) AND WHO REPRESENT NEARLY A 50 PERCENT TURNOVER IN THE PARLIAMENT, WILL CONDUCT BUSINESS ANY DIFFERENTLY THAN MPS DID IN THE PAST. PRESIDENT BANDA PROPOSES AND THEY DISPOSE. YET, HE MAY HAVE MADE A DELIBERATE EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE PARLIAMENT IN THE SEARCH FOR POPULAR AND TALENTED INDIVIDUALS WHO COULD LATER ASSUME OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES.

MOREOVER, THE MPS' QUESTON PERIOD IN EACH
PARLIAMENT, WHILE NOT CONFRONTING MAJOR GOVERNMENT
POLICIES, SERVES TO PERMIT EXPRESSION OF SOME LOCAL
CONCERNS TO WHICH MINISTERS ARE FORCED TO RESPOND.
ALL IN ALL, HOWEVER, THE PARLIAMENT SERVES PRIMARILY
AS A CONSTITUTIONAL DEVICE TO AFFIRM BANDA'S POLICIES
AND TO ENSURE THAT PARTY STALWARTS RECEIVE ADEQUATE
NATIONAL EXPOSURE TO SATISFY THE POLITICEL/PSYCHOLOGICAL

NEEDS OF EACH REGION AND DISTRICT.

8. DETAILS FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.
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